

American Indian Policy in Crisis: Christian Reformers and the Indian, 1865-1900

ISSN 0003-4827

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Recommended Citation

"American Indian Policy in Crisis: Christian Reformers and the Indian, 1865-1900." *The Annals of Iowa* 44 (1978), 402-403.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.8564>

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Philp has presented a first-rate study. The text is thoroughly documented and pleasantly interspersed with excellent photographs. He writes well, has a full command of the materials, and places Collier's career within a broader historical perspective.

Students of Indian-white relations in a modern setting will appreciate the efforts of both of these scholars.

—David A. Walker
University of Northern Iowa

American Indian Policy in Crisis: Christian Reformers and the Indian. 1865-1900, by Francis Paul Prucha. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976. pp. 456. Bibliography, illustrations, index. \$15.00.

"When the whiteman landed on American shores he immediately fell upon his knees to praise God, then he fell upon the Indian." The accuracy of this often-repeated observation is of course open to considerable debate, but the recurrent acts of white-initiated violence against Native Americans are so well documented that the nation still suffers from a collective guilt complex. The seemingly endless cases of martial conflict between Indians and whites have received such thorough attention that relatively little more needs to be written about them. But such is not the case with the more subtle features of forced acculturation and detribalization which bordered on an unwritten policy of cultural genocide. In the long run these attacks upon tribal life and sovereignty have proven more destructive of Indian rights than all of the cumulative wars and broken treaties during four centuries of contact.

Francis Paul Prucha, professor of history at Marquette University, broadens our understanding of the post-Civil War era by analyzing the various white reform groups and their efforts to solve the "Indian Problem." Prucha quickly alerts the reader that this is not a study of comparative cultures or Indian viewpoints, but rather an analysis of white attitudes and actions. Though reformers frequently disagreed on procedures, almost all shared the ethnocentric view that Indians "were to be individualized and Americanized, becoming in the end patriotic American citizens indistinguishable from their white neighbors." (p. v) This myopic and self-righteous view, even though tempered with honesty and the best of intentions, proved calamitous for Indians whose own observations were rarely solicited.

American Indian Policy in Crisis adopts a chronological framework involving detailed treatment of President Grant's Peace Policy, rivalry between War and Interior departments for control of Indian affairs, rise of the Board of Indian Commissioners, changing programs in Indian education, and the growing debate over Indian citizenship. Most enlightening, however, is the author's discussion of the various reform groups and their leaders. From Herbert Welsh's nationally recognized Indian Rights Association to the more regional Boston Indian Citizenship Committee, these groups worked toward

the great dream of total assimilation into the American melting pot. Only Thomas Bland's National Indian Defence Association offered resistance to this major assault on tribalism, but by 1887 it had lost the battle when the Dawes Severalty Act instituted a new age of individual allotments to replace traditional Indian notions of communalism.

Three books by Loring R. Priest, Henry Fritz and Robert Mardock previously covered much of the same ground as *American Indian Policy in Crisis*, but Prucha's work supersedes them as an overview of late nineteenth century Indian policy. Especially interesting is his mention of the "Humanitarian Generals" who played an active role in the philanthropic organizations, and his challenge of Mardock's thesis on the link between old-line abolitionists and the post-Civil War reform movement. A comprehensive bibliography goes beyond the earlier publication by including some of the most obscure organizational reports, and by providing the serial set numbers for each government document. Such thoroughness undoubtedly will facilitate additional research efforts by other scholars.

Though Prucha's book is more an analysis of past events than a modern day didactic on contemporary events, it does present an important message to today's policy makers—Indians must be free to determine their own futures and to resist the detribalization process that has haunted them for so long. Until government officials recognize that today's call for "self-determination" is more than a mere slogan, Indians will continue to have policies made by individuals and groups not totally unlike the misguided reformers of the last century.

—Michael L. Tate
University of Nebraska at Omaha

The Manipulators: America in the Media Age, by Robert Sobel. New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1976. pp. xxii, 458. \$9.95.

America, which grade school history books tell us was founded on the sweat of the pioneers, had a new culture by the early 1900s. Its elements, says Hofstra University historian Robert Sobel, included an emphasis on play rather than work, consumption rather than production, and images rather than reality. It was a mass culture, although it attracted some intellectuals.

The mass culture had three main groups, and still does today. There is a small group creating ideas, a somewhat larger one preparing those ideas for dissemination, and the largest one—the audience for the ideas. Sobel's perception is that the last group, the audience, dominates the first two. His book is an exploration into how the audience class came to dominate in America, and what that domination means for the future of the country.

As the book's title indicates, Sobel believes the new technologies of play and amusement are heavily responsible for the domination of the audience class. In the term "new technologies" he includes new kinds of newspapers, colleges, motion pictures, and most importantly, radio and television.

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